

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief Lowell M. Porter**



## Office of the State Fire Marshal State Fire Marshal Mary Corso

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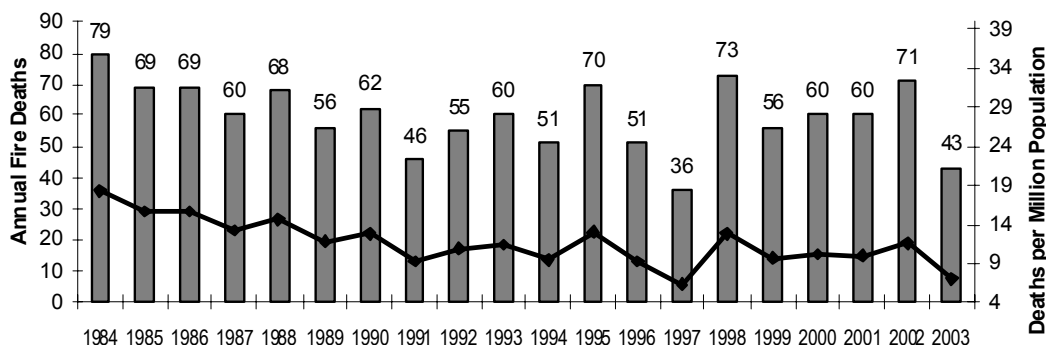
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### Washington Fire Related Deaths Down in 2003

Chief Lowell Porter announced today that fire deaths have decreased 60% in Washington State from 71 deaths in 2002 to 43 fire deaths in 2003.

State Fire Marshal Mary Corso added, "These 43 fire deaths equate to 6.1 fire deaths per million people in Washington State. This is significantly less than the 2002 national rate of 12.1 fire deaths per million as reported by the National Fire Protection Association."

### Washington Fire Deaths and Fire Deaths per Million



Most of these deaths, 65%, occurred where we feel safest, in our homes. In those 15 homes where a smoke detector was present, nearly one-fourth were inoperable. No alarm was present in 37% of the homes where fire fatalities occurred.

Mary Corso urges homeowners: "Install a smoke alarm in your home and check it monthly to ensure it is working. Early warning of fire can double the chance of escape. Smoke alarms save lives. In addition, plan and practice a fire drill at least once a year."

The leading cause of 2003 fire deaths was smoking. Corso offers, "If you smoke, use large, deep ashtrays and check furniture for smoldering cigarettes before going to bed; and never smoke in bed."

The Washington State Association of Fire Marshals reminds you that most fire deaths can be prevented by following these safety practices:

- Remember to install smoke alarms on each level of your home and near each sleeping area.
- Check batteries monthly, and replace batteries annually.
- Make and practice a home fire escape plan.

*The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State, including inspections of state-licensed facilities, plan review of fire protection systems and school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information, you may visit our Web page at [www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov) and then click on "State Fire Marshal."*

For more information on fire safety and statistics, contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.

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